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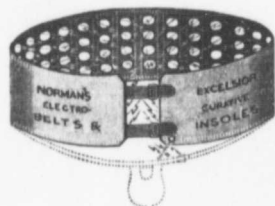
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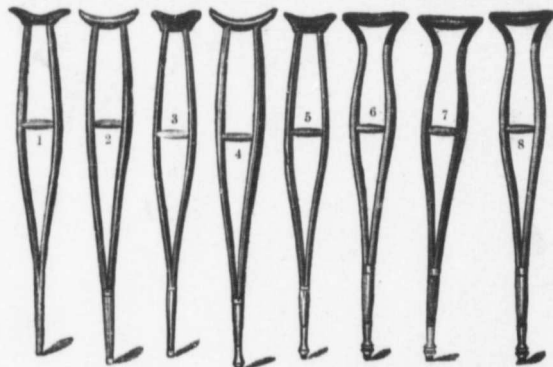
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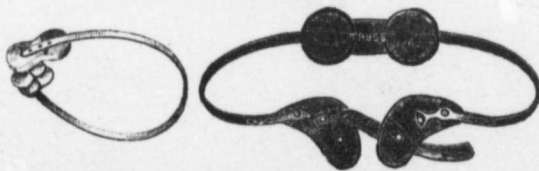


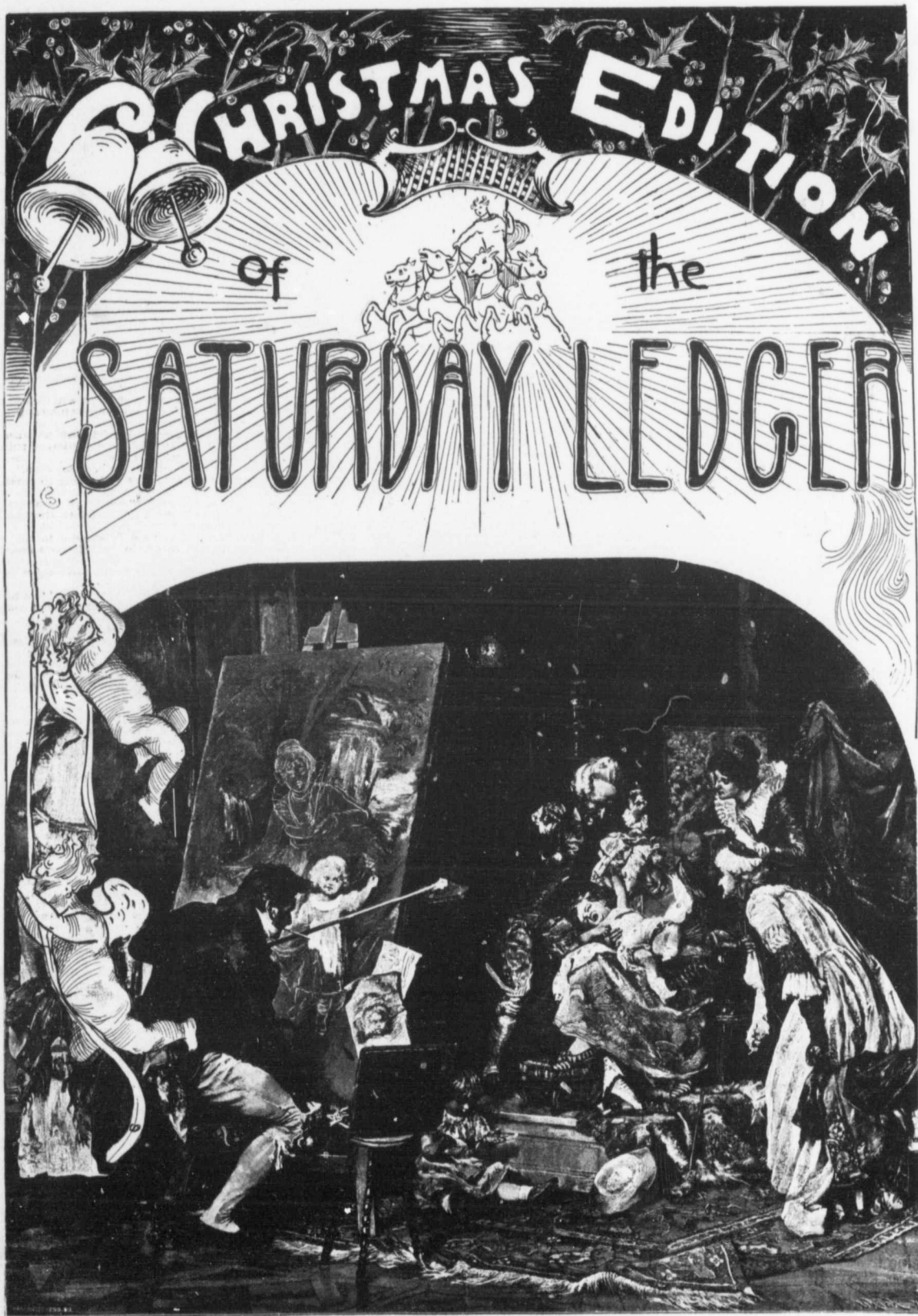
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Little Tom's Mother.

By Mrs. Kate Tannatt Woods,

Author of "A Fair Maid of Marblehead," "Duncans on Land and Sea," "The Wooing of Grandmother Grey," Etc., Etc., Etc.

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PROBABLY a happier couple never sat under the glow of a library lamp than Mr. and Mrs. Max Dugeddon.

Mr. Dugeddon had a fair portion of this world's goods, and his charming wife a marvellous array of talents. She could sing, play, dance, row, ride, and was noted as the best player of cribbage in the county if not in the state. Max Dugeddon was very proud of her; he was pleased when she was admired, and often said he was the happiest man in the world, especially after little Tom came. Little Tom was Max Dugeddon's son and heir and extremely welcome after six years of happy wedded life.

Mrs. Dugeddon was happy also; but there was not a tinge of selfishness in her nature. Before she married him she had been interested in various charities, had taught in the Sunday School of St. Mary's Church, was a member of the Symphony Class, belonged to a Reading Circle composed of her intimate friends, and had more invitations and positive engagements than most society favorites. She was very happy in all this, save for a sense of loneliness since her widowed mother had left her as a mere child. She was sure life must be very sweet with the constant companionship of one who loved you, and when her aunt died and left her the owner of a large house with no one to occupy it but herself and old Mrs. Trott, the housekeeper, Agnes found life a very solemn thing. Max Dugeddon was one of many admirers, but Agnes said them all nay until many months of persistent devotion, she consented to marry Max Dugeddon. Every one said it was a brilliant match, every one thought they were a handsome couple, and not a few openly avowed that Agnes was quite too good for him.

Mrs. Trott thought him a very model of a man; his mother and sisters invariably spoke of him as "simply perfect," but one or two men in Tom's own club said: "It will be all beautiful until she dares to think or act for herself; Agnes Drexel is not the woman to comply with all his selfish whims which his mother and sisters had indulged him in." "Yes," said another club man, "Max is a good boy as long as you let him have his own way, but he makes things lively for any one who opposes him. He gets that from the old father who was so obstinate that his wife always condemned the thing she longed to praise, for the sake of carrying her point.

"I am dead sure of another thing," said a tall, sober-looking man, who had listened to this conversation, "and that is, if trouble ever comes to them it will not be the fault of Agnes Drexel. She is loyal to a fault and as true as steel."

The exacting man is a very lamb when in love; so it was with Max Dugeddon; he seemed to live only to please Agnes, and could easily break engagements of all kinds for her sake, if she would permit it. About six weeks after her marriage, Max insisted upon her dropping the Sunday class as it was his best day at home. Agnes consented readily, fully believing a wife must make home attractive if she desired to keep her husband there. His next step was to sever her connection with the Symphony class by making engagements of importance for her on those evenings. This was a severe trial to Agnes, but she complied without a word, since each time it had been harder and harder for her to leave home. The Reading Club came next. Max went with her a few times and then declared it was a bore, and he needed the quiet of his home after the bustle of the day. He convinced Agnes that he deserved all the reading she could favor him with, and as he would neither attend or call for her, that too was given up.

All this was very hard for a young woman who was anxious to develop herself and wished from her heart to become the

"Perfect woman nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command."

It was made harder when Max attended his Club whenever he wished, and accepted an official position in the city government which called him from home several evenings in the week.

Agnes thought the matter over seriously and wished she might ask the advice of some elderly friend, but she dared not lest it should seem disloyal to Max. As the years went on she made rapid progress in her studies on the evenings when Max left her, and in this way kept up with the Reading Club. Books and music however precious can never compensate one for the companionship of the man a woman has chosen from all the world to walk by her side. Agnes spent many lonely hours, when her eyes grew tired or friends failed to drop in.

The very last man in the world to find out that he is selfish is the man who is so. He who cries out loudly about hen-pecked husbands is the man who is subjugated in his own home. If any one had said in plain terms that Max Dugeddon was tyrannical or exacting in his family, Max would have fought him on the spot. He considered himself a model husband. He certainly lived well, his wife dressed exquisitely, his business integrity was well known, and his fond boast was that "he had the loveliest wife and boy in the world."

The only person who ever held a mirror up to Max was his cousin Clara Fairfax, who had been a room mate of Agnes at school, and flattered herself that she had arranged the match. She was frequently at the house and never failed to amuse herself by "taking down my lord." Max was fond of her; her bright, saucy speeches pleased him and he ignored her rebukes. It often chanced in life that help is near when we feel most forlorn, and Agnes who had spent some very lonely hours in contemplating her duties, and the duties of a husband also, was not sorry to see Clara come in one evening when Max had settled down with his evening paper. After some careless chat and mutual jokes Max exclaimed "Well, here is a surprise,—Donald Chester's wife has taken to lecturing; if I were Don I should stop her or get a divorce."

"Why?" asked his wife without looking up.

"Because I have an utter detestation of a woman who speaks in public on the stage."

"More so than if she sang in public?" asked Agnes.

"That is quite another matter."

"Yes," said Clara, "it is," as she saw a flush creeping into the cheeks of Agnes. "It is decidedly different. I can sing the same old songs for a charity over and over, but the woman who speaks must think of new topics, new questions, new phrases even, she must be creative, as well as receptive, and I think it requires marvellous talent to hold an audience with one's own written thoughts."

"Bless your soul Clara, I never knew you dipped into relative values like that," said Max mockingly.

"No? Well I have been growing wiser since you married."

"Why don't you take to the rostrum?"

"If I knew as much as Agnes did I should; for the woman who speaks a good word for suffering humanity is doing a grander work than she who sings a song, however sweet, for money."

"You are absolutely becoming eloquent," said Max.

"I might in time," said Clara, "if you vexed me as you have done since you brought Agnes here and shut her up like a bird in a cage, while you trot about wherever you please."

"Never mind Agnes," said Max, with a little temper showing in his eyes, "thank heaven my wife is not ambitious."

"How do you know?" asked Agnes with a forced laugh.

"Because you are perfectly contented and happy in your home and in my affections," said Max. "If my wife had such ambitious schemes and looked to the public for applause, I should disown her."

"Come Max, you are talking nonsense," said Clara; "if your wife had a talent for public speaking, you would be as proud as a peacock, and gaze at her with adoring silence; in fact she had been growing out of patience with Max for some time; if my wife were to speak even once on a public platform I would leave her to the public and her fate." Agnes kept her eyes upon the book where she had been diligently searching for a passage which Clara had desired her to find, she pressed her lips firmly together and said nothing.

Clara was not easily silenced; in fact she had been growing out of patience with Max for some time; he seemed to be absolutely blind to the sacrifices his wife was making for him.

"Now Max, if you were not my favorite cousin I would not waste words upon you, positively, you do not deserve it. Would you not speak whenever you felt it your duty to do so?"

"Certainly," said Max "any man would."

"Suppose a woman is placed in a position where she feels it to be a duty, must she remain dumb, or perform that duty."

"Every woman has some man to speak for her" said Max, doggedly.

"Indeed they have not, no man ever speaks for me."

"Then you might marry Sullivan, who is dying to have you."

"But I do not choose to; beside, I would be no better off than Agnes."

"I can always speak for Agnes and she knows it."

"Not if your views are diametrically opposed to hers."

"We agree on most things," said Max.

"On many Max," said his wife, "and we disagree totally on others; you know you are constantly quoting the clergyman who said, 'he did not want a wife who was a mush of concessions.'"

"To be sure and I mean it."

"Then my dear, how can you represent me when we do not agree? For instance on matters of public interest; you believe too much money is spent upon our public schools. I think that a nation which spends more on whiskey and tobacco than on education is not yet civilized."

"Education is one of your hobbies, my dear."

"Max you are sneaking and begging the question," said Clara with a laugh, "the question is, how can you represent Agnes in an important public affair, when you think your own thoughts, and she thinks hers?"

"Come, come if you are determined to hold a caucus here, I will be off, in fact we have a Board meeting this very evening. When my wife wants any public speeches made, I will make them for her. That is fair is it not?"

"No; each individual is responsible for his or her own acts; you could not suffer for a crime I committed, nor I for you," said Agnes thoughtfully.

"We should suffer vicariously," said Max.

"I am speaking now of legal responsibility," said Agnes, "as well as of moral."

"Well don't puzzle your brain over such matters my love, as long as Little Tom and I are satisfied, the world may wag." Max bent over to kiss his wife and saw that her eyes were moist.

"It is for little Tom's sake that I must think, and must inform myself, and must even utter my thoughts if occasion demands; mothers are told that the responsibility of right or wrong doing in public depends upon them in a large measure, and if so, we must think seriously of our work."

"Why my dear, you are the best mother in the land now, what more could you ask?"

"I am not sure of it Max, and I am not always as happy as you think me either."

"You are tired and nervous to-night, keep Clara here until I come back and then I think I can convince you that home is the dearest and best place on earth for a woman."

"But she must keep in touch with the world she is bringing up her boy to dwell in," said Agnes.

"My dear you are too conscientious. Good-by for an hour or two."

"Max" said Clara, as she put on her wraps two hours later, "Agnes is shut up here too much, she should get out more, go to the old reading class, meet the people she cares to meet, have her music, and in short do just as you do."

"Bless my soul, I am not my wife's jailor."

"Perhaps not intentionally Max, but Agnes misses her old liberty and she has given up everything for you."

Max was walking home with his cousin.

"See here Clara," he said in a vexed tone, "now don't put ideas in that girl's head, which she would not have otherwise. My little wife prefers to give up society for me, she tires of it as I do."

"Her soul needs an outing sometimes, and I think you were very severe to-night; you said you would leave a wife who would speak in public; now Agnes often spoke in our Literary Club, and spoke well, she is too superior not to have ideas of her own."

"Oh I mean before people of both sexes, women's talks never amount to much."

"Thank you," said Clara meekly, "nevertheless it is their talk and work which brings in most of the money used in our churches and charities."

"The truth is, Clara, I have some very strong feelings on several subjects and I would no more think of permitting my wife to open her lips in a mixed assembly, than I should of putting her up at auction."

"May heaven send you wisdom," said Clara, as she parted from him at the door. How our careless words come back to us with a new meaning



SURPRISED.

By E. Meisel.

all through life. Before Clara Fairfax met her cousin again he had need of heaven's wisdom.

A little portion of Clara's sermon fell on good ground. The next day when Alderman Carew met Max down town he said "See here, Dugeddon, we have just discovered a case of destitution which is appalling, and it is one for women to handle; the woman in case is mother of an infant only three days old, and has two others, mere babies all of them; they were once wealthy, and he is a drunken sot. I have just learned that the woman who is in a very weak condition, says she attended school with your wife. Would it not be well to get my wife and yours as soon as we can to look the thing up? Such people would rather die than be treated like paupers."

"Of course," said Max, "Mrs. Dugeddon is never happier than when engaged in helping some one, I will drive up and bring her down at once and we will call for Mrs. Carew en route."

"All right, here is the address of the sufferer," Pitiful indeed was the case which they found. A woman, delicate and refined, once the daughter of wealthy parents, and a belle, now in a damp basement, scantily covered with clothing. In a cot near her was another child, sick and neglected, and a third had been buried while the mother was helpless. A mere accident had revealed the situation, for pride kept the victims from making themselves known.

Agnes Dugeddon was pained indeed to find an old school-mate in such distress, and the two ladies made many journeys to their own homes before the family were rendered comfortable. The wretched cause of all this misery sat upon the floor in one corner of the room in a drunken stupor until he was removed to an infirmary asylum.

Max entered heartily into all his wife's plans, and opened his purse frequently, always saluted by the plaintive appeal of his wife, "only think if it were dear little Tom." It was very near the holidays, and the Dugeddon's voted that every cent intended for family gifts should be used for the Anstruthers. Thus a comfortable tenement was provided, and the sick woman removed there as soon as the physician would permit. Shelter is good, but one must have food and clothing as well as shelter, and Agnes thought of many plans for assisting Mrs. Anstruther without wounding her sensitive nature, made even more sensitive by the sorrow she had undergone. That afternoon the Parish Committee met for the purpose of completing their arrangements for a large Christmas tree. Both Max and his wife were on this committee, the mayor and other official gentlemen would be present, being members of the same society, and although it was stated that they had not three poor people in the parish, a tree had been suggested as a means of promoting sociability or as some one put it "having a good time." Agnes' heart was full of pity for the family she had seen, and all through the evening when Max was at his club, she had been planning something for the further relief of the unfortunate Anstruthers. The meeting was full, every one was eager to share in the "good time."

Before His Honor called the meeting to order, Agnes had an opportunity to chat a few moments with the mayor, and to impress upon him the fact that this should be a special case for personal effort and not be made public.

"Certainly," said the mayor, "Mr. Anstruther was at one time prominent here in public affairs, and the city owes him a large debt of gratitude; delicacy demands quiet measures in a case like this; let us keep it in our own parish for the present and await further developments. The mayor said much the same thing when he opened the meeting. No names were mentioned, but he felt that the suggestion of Mrs. Dugeddon that the noblest work of the parish this year would be to spend the money or a portion of it for a noble and good woman who was suffering through no fault of her own. The mayor spoke eloquently, but the man who always objects, and the woman who always doubts, were both present and the matter was debated with some spirit.

"Let them be helped by the city," said one man. "Place the case in the hands of the overseers of the poor," said another.

"Then the aggressive woman who always doubts rose, and thought "it highly improper to divert the money from the regular channels; the parish had talked of an elegant Christmas tree which should cost \$1,000 and the plan should be carried out; if people were poor it was their own fault; why did not some one hunt up the relatives of these people and let them take care of their own?"

The mayor appealed to Mrs. Dugeddon. Had they relatives?

In a low voice Agnes said "No, they had none on this side of the water, if anywhere."

More objections were raised, until Agnes could have wept for humanity's sake. To think of it, she said to herself, in the name of the Christ spirit in a Christmas meeting. While she was thinking sadly of it all, she heard her voice called, and her pastor

was saying, "I think friends we must know more of this case, may I not ask Mrs. Dugeddon to come here to the desk and tell us more about it? Any case like this is interested in is sure to be one we can all endorse."

Poor Agnes. Never had she opened her lips in that church. She had worked hard, had given money freely, had sung again and again at their various gatherings, but how could she speak. Something seemed to say, "for little Tom's sake." She rose in her seat, but her pastor came and kindly led her forward, whispering as he did so, "Courage little woman it means help for another." Agnes never did quite know how she stepped upon the small platform in the church vestry; she never did quite understand why her voice had a strange, far off sound, or why her lips seemed so dry and hard. In a few well chosen words she told the story of this suffering woman, of the visit she had made with a lady of another church of the loved sisterhood, which knew no limitations, because it was the sisterhood which had its home in the fatherhood of God, and as she related some things which she had seen in that home, many eyes grew moist and one and another said "she shall have my money for them."

Even the men who had objected withdrew their objections as soon as she sat down. A vote was taken, and to the delight of Agnes a pleasant social evening with a modest tree would suffice, while the bulk of the money should be invested for Mrs. Anstruther.

The aggressive woman never hesitates to continue a contest even when apparently vanquished. While Agnes was receiving the congratulations of her friends, the aggressive member went out with her head in the air. At the door whom should she meet but Max Dugeddon who had hurried up, hoping to speak a word before the close of the meeting.

"Ah, Mr. Dugeddon" said the A. G. with one of her positive smiles, "you are just a little too late; I declare I never knew you had married a female orator, your wife has just captivated them all by her eloquence, quite a woman's rights' speech I do assure you." Max was thunderstruck. Could it be possible that Agnes had done such a foolish thing, Agnes meantime was hearing her friends say "I would give the world to be able to express myself as you do" and "how noble it was in you dear Mrs. Dugeddon, I am proud of you." Even the venerable pastor pressed her hand reverently and said "Ah, child, I never thought when I christened you, what a comfort you would be to me as well as to the church."

"It was so hard at first, said Agnes, until I thought of little Tom and then I forgot everything but that other poor baby."

As Max turned from the aggressive woman with a bow, he encountered Mr. Cortellis the superintendent of the Sunday School who also put an arrow into his flesh by saying "I declare Dugeddon, your wife has conquered us all, she should take to the platform and make herself famous." Poor Max was nearly beside himself by this time, and therefore thought only of himself, that being his usual custom first; other people might follow. He walked down the church path to the carriage gate like a man in a dream. Agnes had really defied him; she had listened to Clara and disregarded his wishes; well, he would teach her a lesson; when Max Dugeddon said a thing he meant it. He was too discreet to wound his wife openly and he did the first thing which entered his head. Thomas was at the gate with the horses. Taking his card from his pocket he wrote upon it "Shall not be home to dinner." Then he ordered Thomas to wait for his mistress while he hurried away to his club.

Everyone wondered what was the matter with Dugeddon; he scarcely spoke, and at last, spent a long time in the writing room, where he prepared and sent away the following note. It was cruel and brief; but a selfish man does not consider the hurts administered to others, he cares only for his own:—

AGNES: You knew my wishes and my views, and you have disobeyed me. I shall not be home to-night and may possibly go to New York to spend Christmas.

AGNES read this unloving and cruel note in her own parlor surrounded by friends who had called to congratulate her upon her "maiden speech."

"I quite long to see Mr. Dugeddon, said a motherly woman, I think my dear he must know how proud we are of you, and what a victory it was."

"Yes," said Agnes not knowing a word the lady had said. She needed time to think, and the moment her friends left her, she went to the nursery to see little Tom.

Every mother finds her baby a source of strength in time of trouble. Nothing soothes a heart ache like the beating of another heart which is part of our own life. How could Max upbraid her for defending that other poor baby and its mother? If he had waited she might have explained it all, but Max never waited, his way was the way, and his will his will, his world, must follow it. Agnes gave the nurse an extra evening out and devoted herself to Tom. He had never been cruel to her and never,

never, could think that she had disgraced him. Agnes could not even cry as some women can; the hurt was too deep. Max was not quite the noble man she had thought him; she had not succeeded in making him less selfish and exacting as she had prayed to do, and in her heart she felt humiliated because he was the man she had chosen from all the world, and dear little Tom's father. The recording angels were busy that night writing down the prayers which this mother breathed over her sleeping child. The only answer to them came in a resolve to do what seemed right and trust to God for results. Max had never left her even for one night since their marriage; she had travelled with him everywhere, and now he voluntarily stayed away because she had simply performed a christian act. She spent a long time in prayer before she wrote one word, and then sent Thomas down to the club house with her husband's portmanteau and a note.

If Max would be foolish he must not appear so to others; he was her husband, and little Tom's father; whatever came she must remember that.

"Thomas, she said in the gentlest tones, your master may possibly be called away to New York and I have packed some things for him, I want you to take them to him as soon as you can, and give him this note also."

"I hope the master will not be away and spoil the Christmas for you ma'am."

"We will hope not, Thomas."

Half an hour later Max Dugeddon was rejoiced to hear that his man was enquiring for him. "Ah, he said to himself, Agnes has repented and the moment she is sorry that ends it, and I will go home. It is the first time she ever opposed me and it will be the last." He opened the note and read:—

"DEAR MAX: Judge not, I only did my duty by a suffering woman and at the request of my pastor. There can be no disgrace without sin, and your wife has not sinned, either against you or the proprieties. I could not let you go from home without your toilet comforts, and I have put all the necessary articles in, I trust; if more are wanting send Thomas back. Little Tom is in my arms while I write, and I have kissed him good night for you. Your devoted wife.

AGNES. Never was an imperious man more surprised. She was not sorry in the least, and seemed to take it for granted that he would go away. In fact she seemed willing to have him. He could scarcely believe his eyes and ears; his Agnes, who never left him, and whose every word and look was loyalty, was actually willing to leave him away in the holiday season, when, to his certain knowledge, she had planned a tiny Christmas Tree for little Tom and had sundry surprises for him which had been hidden away for months. Max was not quite ready to give in and go home, he was not the sort of man to allow any one to thwart him, least of all a woman. "There is no answer, Thomas" he said crustily.

"Nothing special sir, if you be gone over Christmas, sir?"

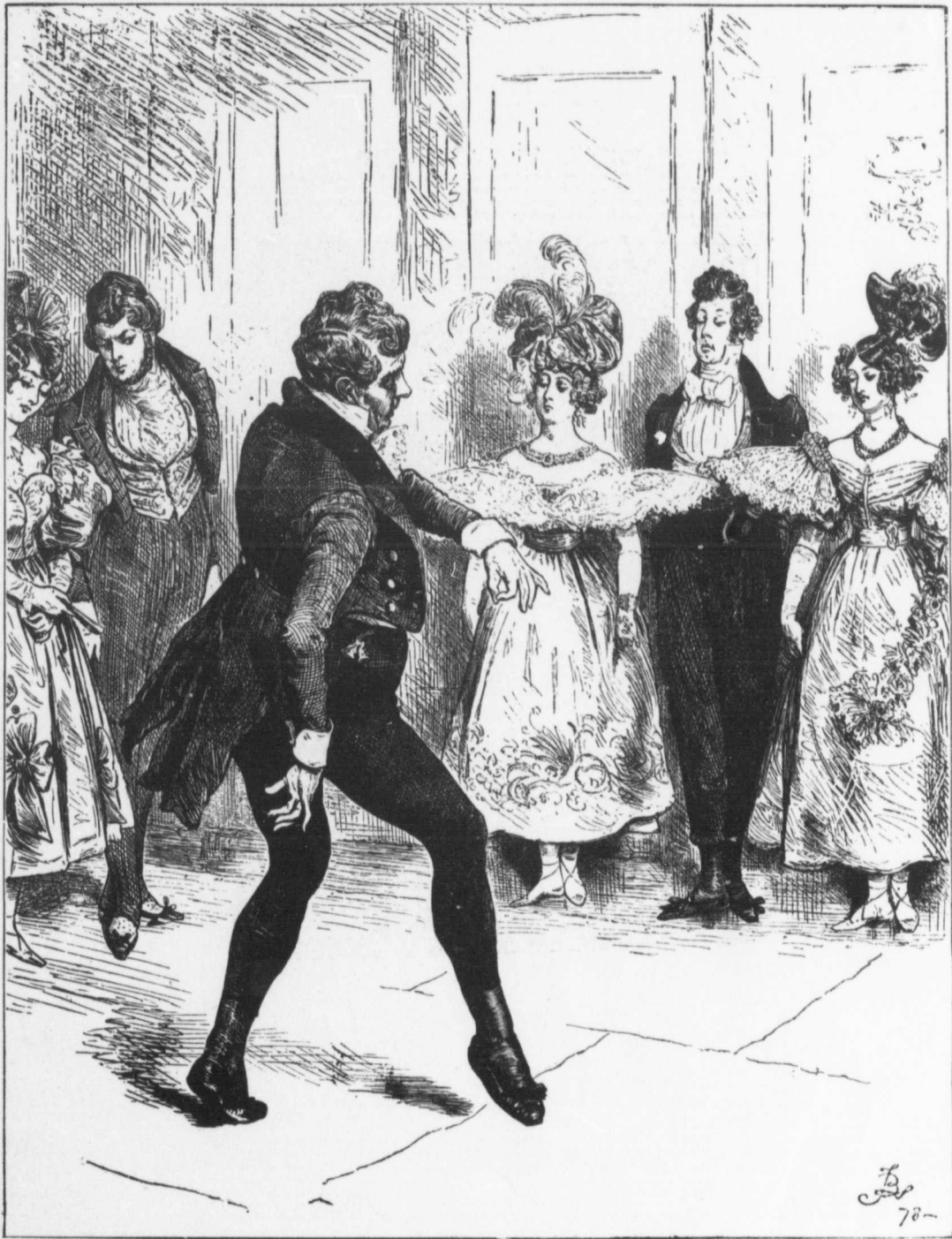
"Nothing, I may not go, everything depends on my despatches." Thomas bowed and went out. For two mortal hours Max Dugeddon fumed alone and then suddenly seized his portmanteau and hurried into a cab, he had just five minutes to catch the night express to New York, if he caught it he would go, if not; at all events he would let Agnes see that he was not to be trifled with. He caught the train. Retributive justice had Max well in hand that night, and never thought once of the little woman who vainly tried to sleep with little Tom by her side.

The day before Christmas a telegram came from Max, it was even colder than telegrams usually are, and merely said, "Arrived safely, address Murray Hill Hotel." Agnes spent most of the day preparing for the Church festival and in providing for Mrs. Anstruther. She had little time for despondency, although her heart ached for Max.

It was their first separation and she felt it keenly; but being a brave woman she went about her duties, looking a little paler than usual but kind and cheerful to all. She dreaded Christmas day more than she could well say, but her heart ache must be kept from the servants and especially from Tom's mother and sisters. They were much surprised to hear of his absence and said it must be something about those bothersome stocks he had been buying and hoped he would get home before Christmas day was quite over, as they had invited guests to meet them.

"Would not Agnes come and stay with them?" "No," she felt it her duty to remain at home, especially as Max might arrive at any moment. They left her with many regrets to enjoy little Tom's company, and the mother was the only one to think Agnes was doing quite the proper thing. "It is delightful to see them so fond she said and Max would be furious if he should come and find her gone."

Clara Fairfax had also gone away to spend the holidays, so the young wife was quite alone. There is nothing quite equal in dreariness to a holiday spent in solitude when memory calls up the absent



DANCING WAS DANCING IN THOSE DAYS.

By F. Bernard, F.R.A.

circle and bright days forever past. To add misery to misery, Christmas morning had been the time when Agnes was called upon to part with her only remaining relative, her devoted aunt. She had struggled against the gloom that seemed inevitable, and since her marriage Max had invariably arranged some entertainment either in the family or out of it, which would give her little leisure for retrospection. This was the saddest day Agnes had ever known, and she resolved to make it a happy one for her servants; consequently little Tom was with her until his time came for a morning nap and later on only one servant was kept in to do her bidding. There had been a sudden change in the weather the night previous, and a slight fall of snow dressed the earth and chilled the air. Agnes decided to remain at home in the evening, merely sending out her girls and a note to her pastor saying she could not possibly attend the social gathering as Mr. Dugeddon had been called from home suddenly.

She could not taste the turkey which cook had so daintily prepared and when her waitress expressed surprise she said, "I think I have taken a little cold, and it will be better to diet; I have had cold chills since last evening when I returned from the church."

"Then I'll not take the afternoon ma'am," said the girl who was sincerely attached to her mistress.

"Oh yes, go by all means, I shall read and Thomas will be in, he had orders from Mr. Dugeddon not to leave the house in his absence." They all obeyed her and went their several ways to make merry. How was it with the master of the house? He fully expected to receive some message from Agnes but none came; in order to while away the time he accepted an invitation to dine with some bachelor friends at their club, and although he seemed to be in the best of spirits, he found himself wondering what his wife was doing. "She will have Clara over, I dare say, or mother and the girls will take them both out to Langville; she will not pine for me or she would not have sent me my traps." Thus he argued with himself while making merry with his friends. It was late before they parted. Max had for one brief moment thought of going home on the midnight train, but his friends urged him to remain and join them at a dinner to be given on the following day. Still angry with his wife, as he thought, the more so as no message came, he consented, but did not write or send even the telegram which he had written in his pocket. So the holidays passed until the twenty-seventh of December arrived and Max was glad to find himself on the way home. He had arranged to arrive after dark in order to avoid the questions of curious friends. He had once more tasted the so called freedom of bachelor life and found himself disgusted. He wondered in fact how he had ever enjoyed "making a night of it," and why, men otherwise sensible, could render themselves ridiculous and consider it either droll or jovial. He could not read or sleep on the train for his mind was occupied in thinking how Agnes would receive him. His mother and sisters would fall upon his neck and nearly smother him with kisses while bewailing his loss; Alice was quite different, he had always rejoiced that she was; her love was full of surprises and yet never failed him. He found himself trying to think how she had dressed for the church affair, and if she sang; they would have her sing and Max was proud of her voice. Then he wondered if little Tom would know him and cry out in that droll way "Mack, my Mack." As he drew near home he saw a dim light in the room where Agnes slept and the gas in the lower hall still burning, and he said they are expecting me. He let himself in and was surprised to see Thomas sitting on a chair in the hall, the man sprang up quickly saying: "Thank heaven you got it sir."

"Got what Thomas?" asked Max as he pulled off his coat.

"The message sir, that Dr. Langdon sent sir about Missis."

"Is my wife ill?"

"Indeed she is sir, it was chills she was taken with but the doctor says how its the Nemomy."

Max went up the stairs like a man racing for his life. At the top he met the doctor. "Hold on Dugeddon, I must speak with you first," said he as he drew Max into the sewing room which Agnes had made a dream of beauty and comfort.

"What ails my wife?" demanded Max brusquely.

"She has double pneumonia, Dugeddon, and is very ill."

"When was she taken?"

"I was called on Christmas night, she must have been ailing before, and seems rather run down. I have devoted myself to her especially, knowing how much depends on prompt action, and I hope for

but everything went wrong, nothing was in its place, and what did he care for clothing or appearances with Agnes ill?"

When he went back the doctor said in cheery tones: "Well, Mrs. Dugeddon, your best nurse has come and I shall leave you now, keep very quiet until I see you again. Let your husband talk to you but do not talk yourself." Agnes held out a little burning hand for a farewell. "No you must not move, even to be polite, save as the cough moves you; for the next forty-eight hours imagine yourself in a glass case and then we will let you dictate terms to us. Max knelt down by his wife's bed and kissed her again and again. No words would come at his bidding save "my poor darling, my poor darling."

His wife knew that self reproach had taken the place of self will and pride. Never was a man more rebellious, but anger had fled from him, he knew only that Agnes was in danger and his whole soul rebelled against it. He thought of all their happy life together, of her devotion and his selfish exactions, and of little Tom. No, there would not be justice in heaven if Agnes left him. Clara's words came back to him "may heaven send you wisdom," and wisdom had come to him but the price was the life of the woman he loved best. He seldom left her, even little Tom seemed of small importance now, he was eager to have him sent out for his airing lest one cry might distress Agnes. No one saw her but the nurse and himself, while the doctor came in several times each day. Night after night Max lived over the past, night after night he was maddened by her suffering.

"Agnes my love," he said one night after the doctor had suggested that counsel might be more satisfactory, "is there nothing I can do for you, nothing in all the world you can think of? Give me the comfort of thinking I am of some use, dear."

"Such a dear, kind nurse," she said, "don't worry, Max, it is all right, I am not afraid, only for you and little Tom."

"Don't talk that way, Agnes, don't tell me you are willing to, to, never get better; I know I have been a selfish brute, I see it now, but darling do try and get better for my sake and little Tom's."

She put her hand in his and whispered:

"So all God does, if rightly understood,

Shall work thy final good." Max was almost broken hearted; it seemed to him that Agnes was even ready to leave him, was too resigned. If she would only make a great effort to live; if she would believe for even one hour in mind cure which he had hitherto laughed to scorn, if she would drink more, or sleep more, or do anything in the world, but rest there, with such a sad drawn face and yet so hopeful. He had always admired the deep spiritual side of her character, because it was wanting in his own, but now he longed to have her "of the earth, earthly."

The doctor gave them very little encouragement after consulting with the best medical authorities. Then Max railed at the doctors, they were dolts, would send for others. Good Dr. Langdon understood human nature and let him have his way; all agreed with the family physician. Mrs. Dugeddon had evidently been far from well for a long time. She might rally, youth might triumph, but the chances were against her. Max was nearly beside himself. He had never been thwarted in his life, he had money and friends, youth and strength, he would give all to see that beautiful woman once more moving about his home. He grew so restless that the doctor sent him out for a walk in the garden, but everything added to his misery; each spot and each path was associated with Agnes. If she— he could not in his thoughts utter that dreadful word, if anything happened to her he did not care to live; it was his cruel conduct which had caused all this,



FAITH.

the best, she is so young and apparently healthy."

"Can I see her?" asked Max in a husky voice.

"She has not asked for you, she is very quiet and takes all the nourishment we can give her. If you will promise not to talk I think I can venture to let you see her, although we must guard against any excitement." Max started toward the door of Agnes' room.

"Wait a bit, Dugeddon, if you will pardon me, I think you had better bathe a bit and get off the travel stain, and by that time I will tell her that you have arrived. Did you get my telegrams, I sent you two?"

"No," gasped Max as he thought of the manner in which he had passed his Christmas, while his wife was alone and in danger, "no, not a word." He went to his dressing room and began to dress,



By Richard Lotter.

A MERRY CROWD.
BATHING BEAUTIES, 1890.

had he remained at home she would have gone out in the fresh air and have gained the power to ward off such an attack. He went back to his wife's room; she was waiting for him and had missed him. He bent over her to hear her low words "I want my baby," she said. Max went after him with the tears raining down his cheeks. They brought the child and put him close by her side, and she smiled as she had not done for days. When they tried to remove him she shook her head, and they left him until the doctor came. "Oh yes, better let her have all she wants, poor girl, it will not hurt the boy I think." This was more than Max could bear. He went out and walked up and down the library floor until day dawned before he had courage to return to his wife.

"She wants you, sir," said the nurse, and Max hurried to her, feeling that the end was near and he must be by her side.

She looked up brightly as he entered, and said in better voice than Max had heard since his return, "I am better dear, little Tom made me sleep, and now you must go away and thank God he has left you little Tom's mother." Max was on his knees in an instant. He could not speak. He could only pat the thin, white cheek which had grown so dear to him as it became thinner and thinner. He did not rise when the doctor entered, and when he heard from his lips that the disease had taken a favorable turn, Max bowed his head, and for the first time in his life, fully realized the power and comfort of prayer.

"Now, Dugeddon," said the doctor, "we must have you taking better care of yourself, go to bed and sleep for ten solid hours; this little woman will need the tenderest care for many weeks to come."

"She shall have it while I live," said Max fervently.

The Christmas bells had ceased to ring for that season, but the Christmas peace was in the heart of all that household and wherever Agnes was known. The following year Max Dugeddon with his wife and child went about the city carrying joy and gladness into many homes less comfortable than their own. Wherever sickness or sorrow cast a shadow, there went Max, always presenting his offering in the name of his wife and child.

Strangers sometimes wonder why so young a man should have snow white hair, and those who knew Max at the club frequently commented on the great change in his manner, but none, save Agnes, will ever know that he suffered crucifixion, when self was laid low. He came out of the trial a braver and a better man, and Clara Fairfax no longer chides him for his selfishness.

Neither then or ever after did Agnes mention her experiences during that bitter Christmas season, nor Max ever quite knew how it was until one day when he was looking over her diary to find a reference she had desired. Under the date of that Christmas day he read these lines of Keble's:

"Let storm and darkness do their worst;
For the lost dream the heart may ache,
The heart may ache, but may not burst;
Heaven will not leave thee nor forsake."

Out from the depths on his manly heart, made perfect through suffering, there went up to heaven's gate an unspoken prayer:

"Heaven help me to be worthy of little Tom's Mother."

THE END.

Merry Christmas, Ho!

MERRY, Merry Christmas, Ho!
By the fireside's merry glow
I can never forget my pretty pet
As she romped some years ago.
But as the green sward after rain
Renews its beauty not in vain,
That tempest pass'd, and she to me
Became a blest reality,
Making my life what it should be.

MERRY, Merry Christmas, Ho!
The light gleams to and fro
On the busy street, where the many feet
Press over the glistening snow.
The outward garb, the features play,
Page-Like you read their lives away.
A loving wish, a pitying sigh
Wells up your heart when passing by—
We're kindred all—God bless the tie!

MERRY, Merry Christmas, Ho!
Sweet song of long ago;
Some chords are left the seraphs swept,
And fill the vales below.
For the bridal of the earth and heav'n,
That blessed morn, the links were given,
And so we hear the merry chime,
One hand enclosing Father Time,
The other reached by hands divine.

Toronto.

S. D. O.

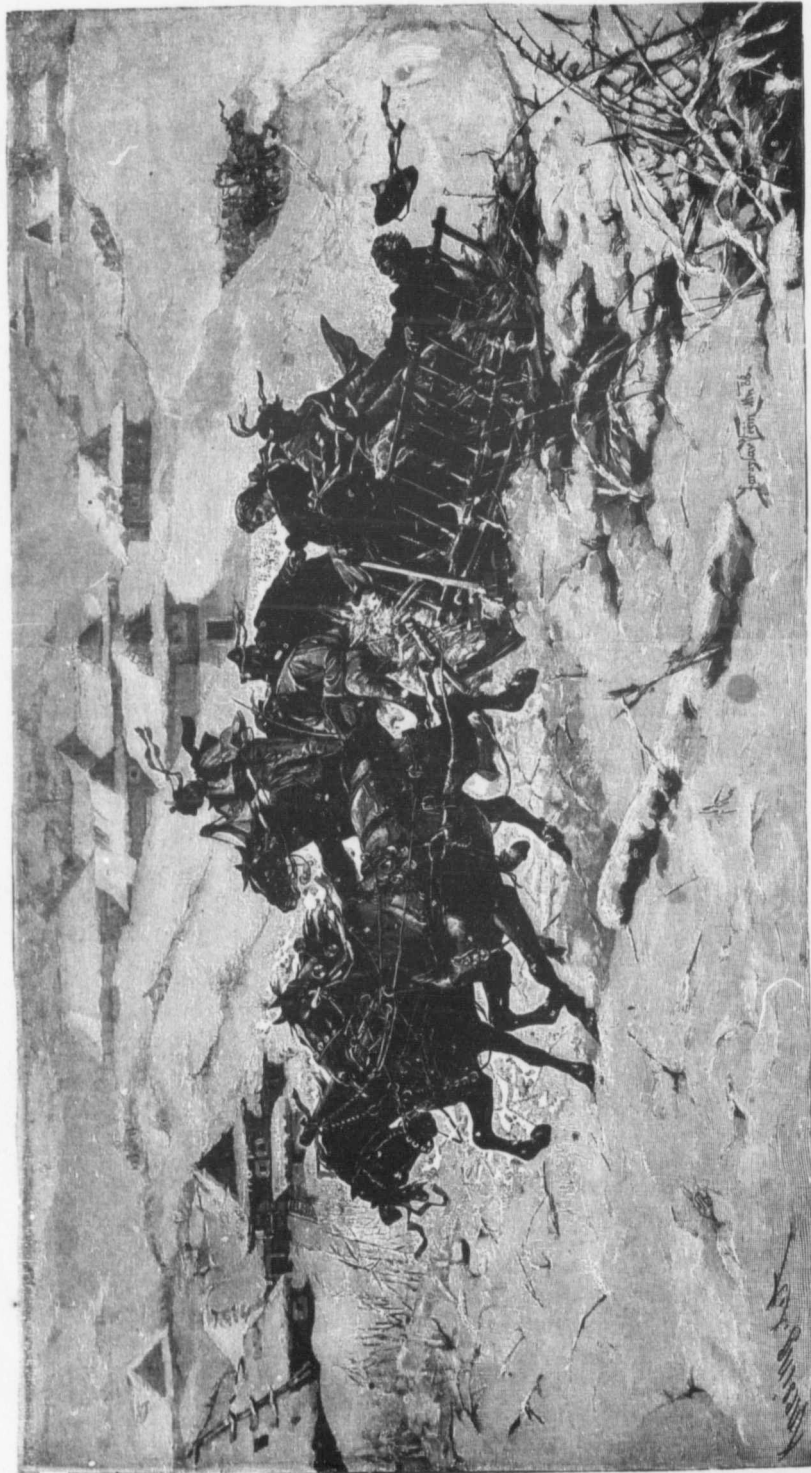


PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, OTTAWA.



THE MORNING PRAYER.

By Paul Wagner.



By Jaroslav Vesin

THROUGH THICK AND THIN



THE HONEYMOON

By L. Alvarez



CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

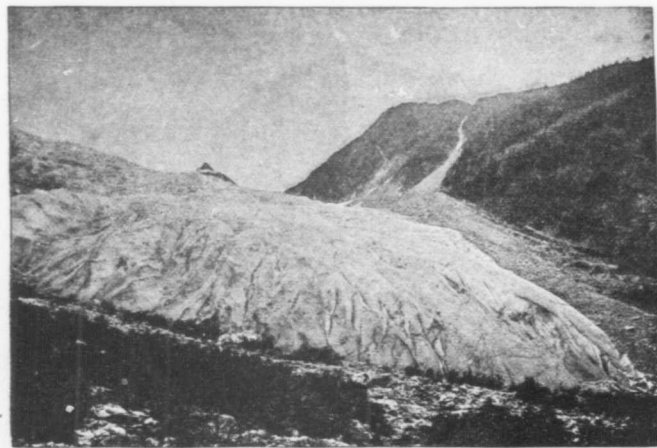
By Antonio Rotter.



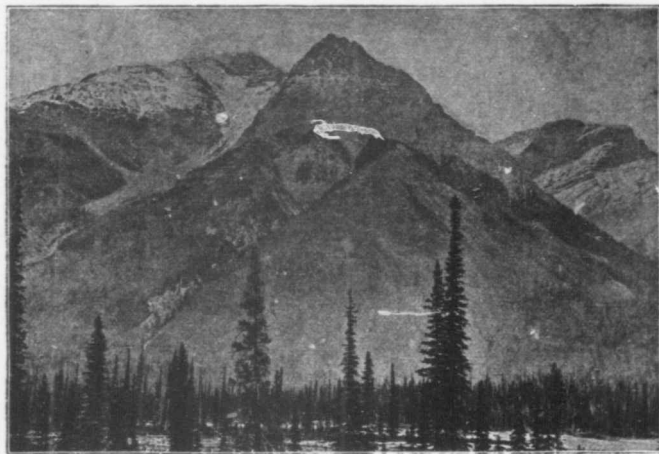
MR. QUIVERFULL'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT.



BIG TREES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



GLACIER IN THE ROCKIES

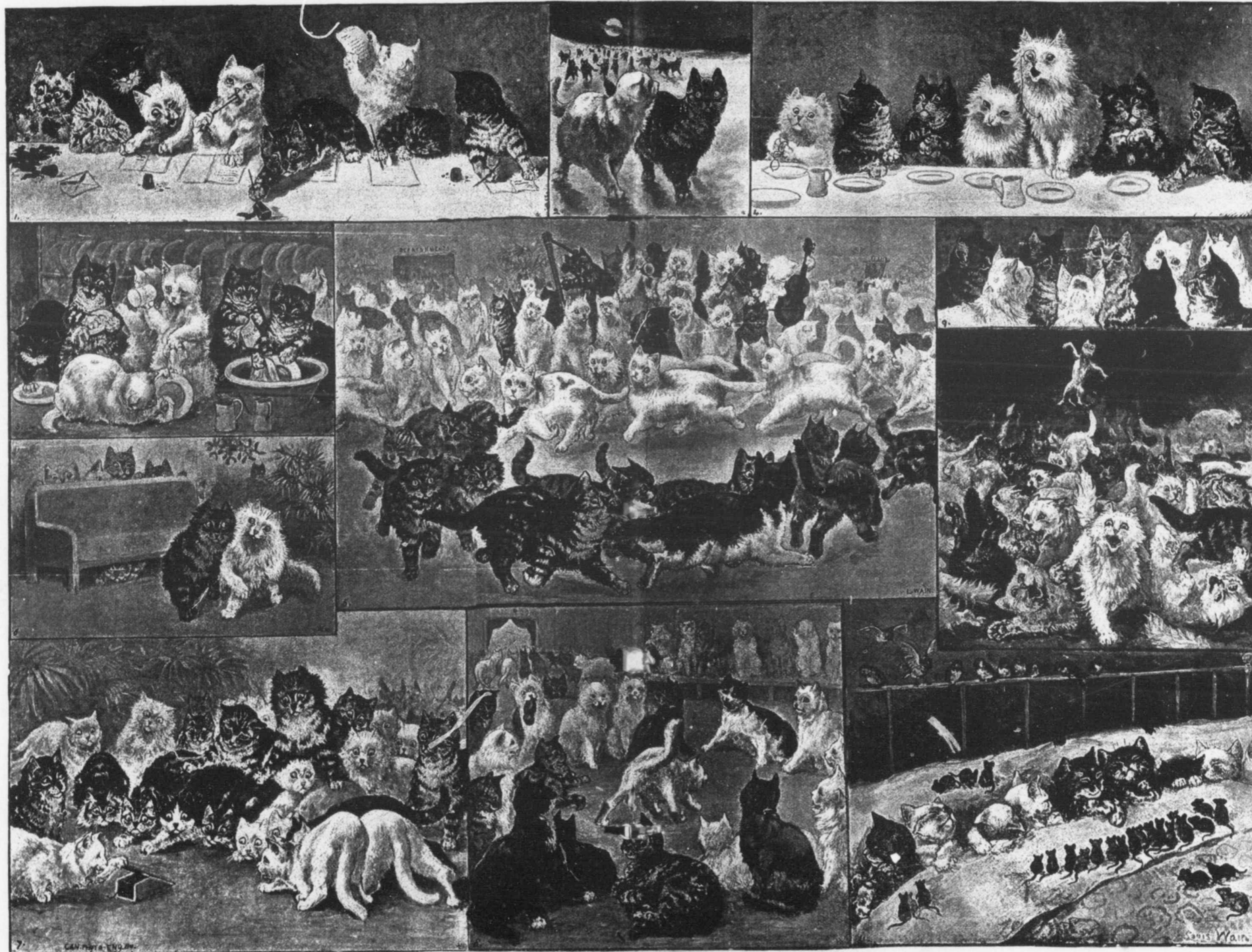


AMONG THE ROCKIES



ANOTHER CONQUEST

By M. Del Rincon



1. We write out letters of invitation to the aristocracy and a lot more besides.
 2. Who all come to the party. 3. Our preparations are extensive.

4. The after-dinner speeches were a great success.
 5. And so was the bull.
 6. Some of the party seek amusement under the mistletoe.

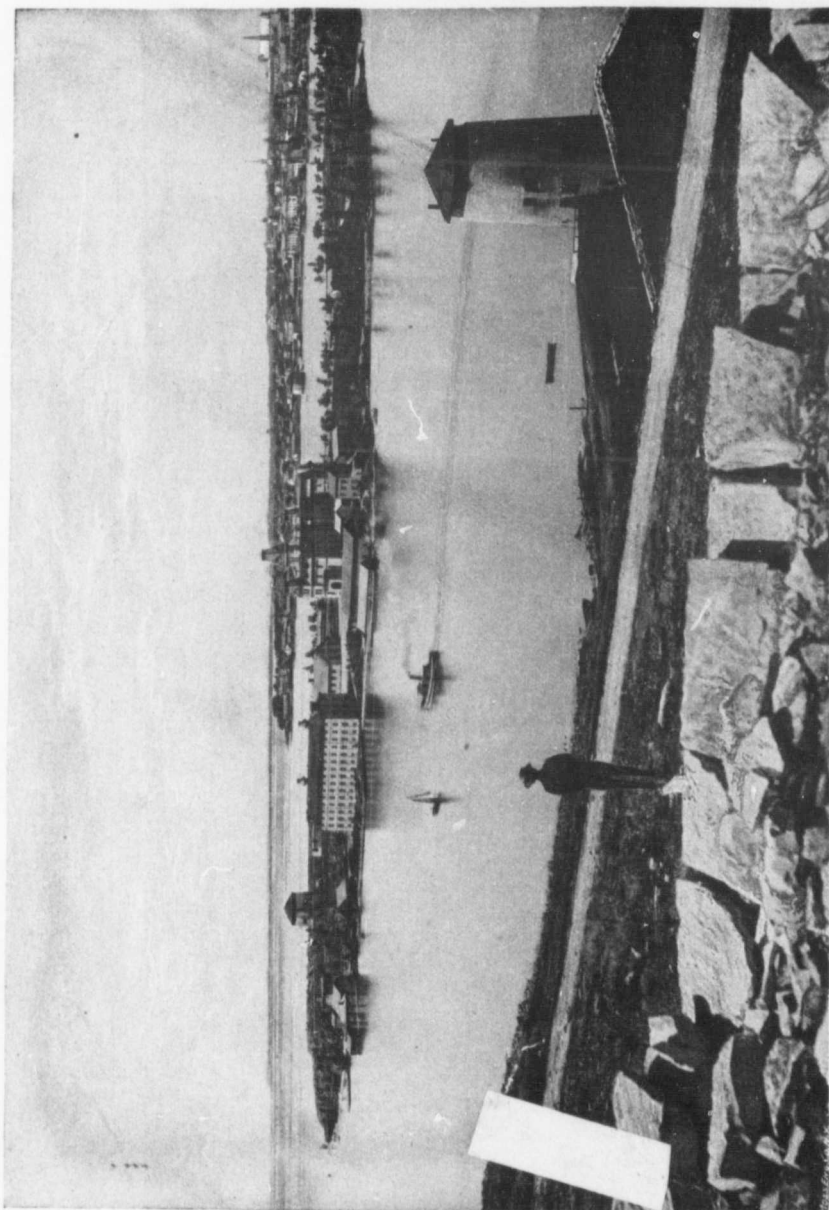
7. Others we invite to a mouge-hunt.
 8. And the fun waxes fast and furious when we form a ring and play *alfant-the-slipper*.

9. Alas! in early morning we are compelled to sit in solemn council to devise a means to break up the party, as the kittens won't go.
 A terrier ghost—the very thing!

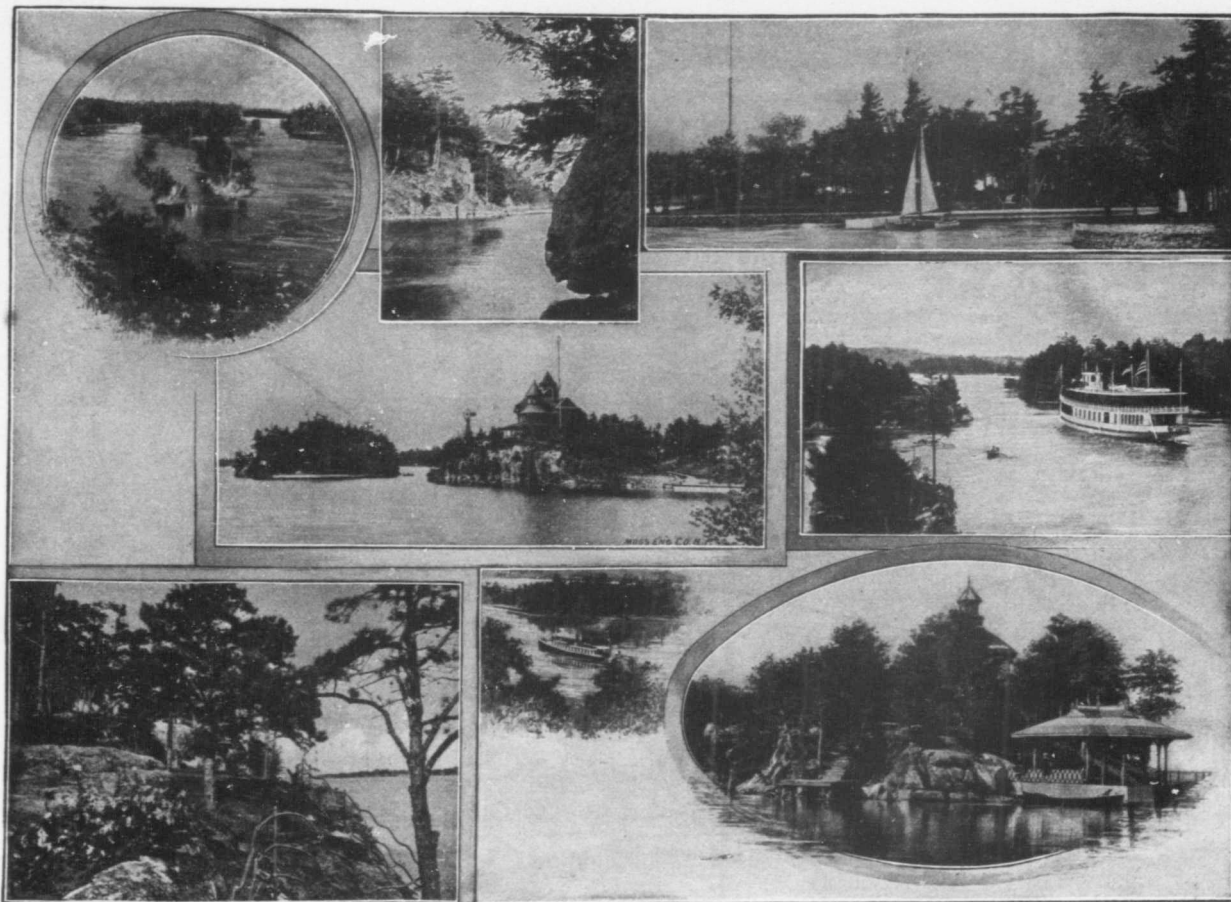
10. Our plan is effectual.
 11. And we retire, worn out, and sleep the sleep of peace, and dream of mice and dicky-birds.

A KITTEN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY.

By Louis Wain.



KINGSTON, ONTARIO

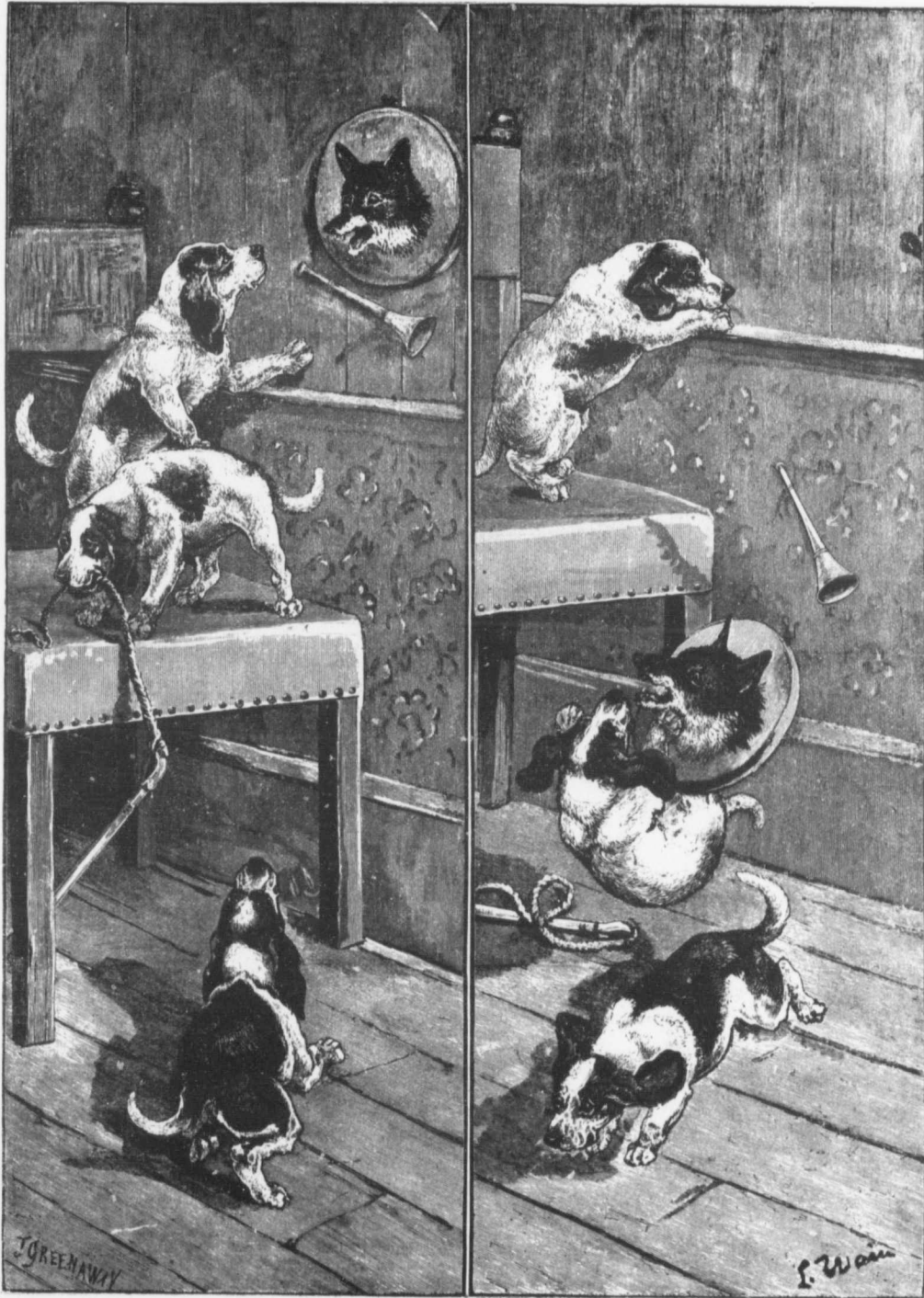


AMONG THE THOUSAND ISLANDS



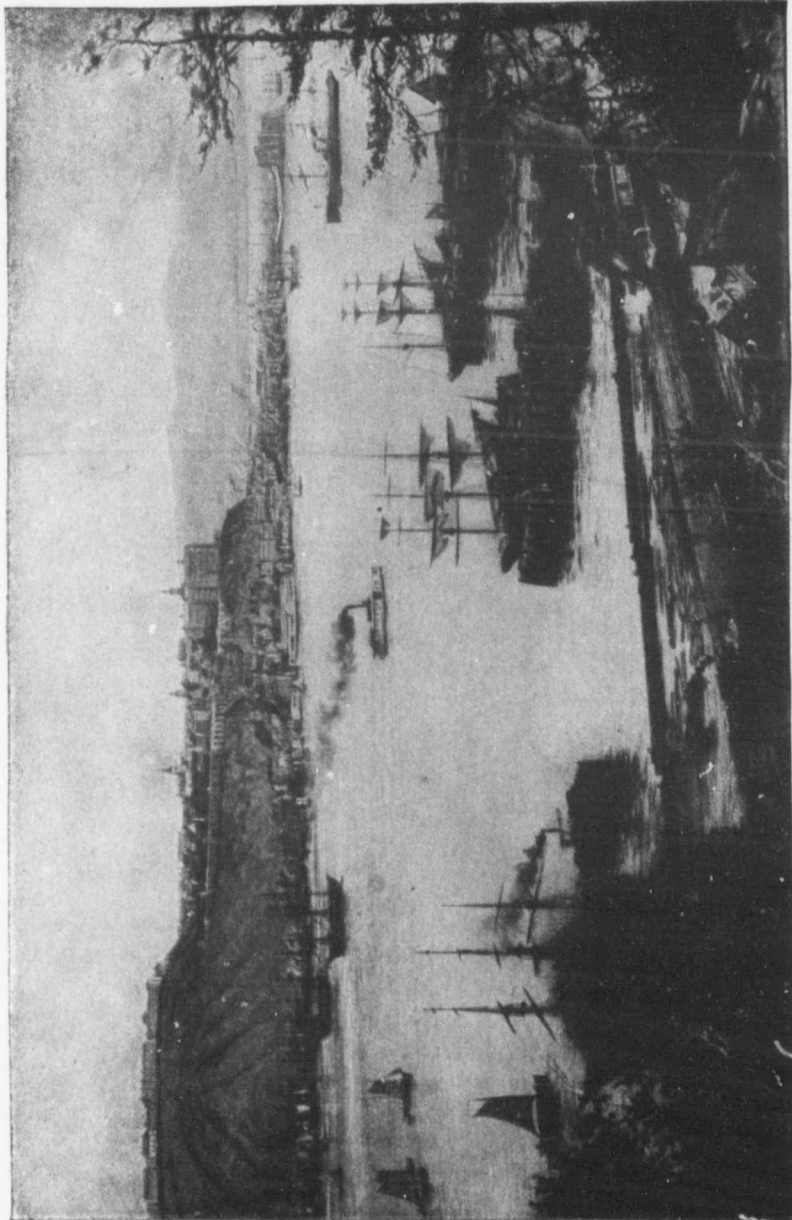
MOTHER IS ILL.

From the celebrated Painting by G. Chierice.



TALLY HO! GONE AWAY.

By Louis Wain.



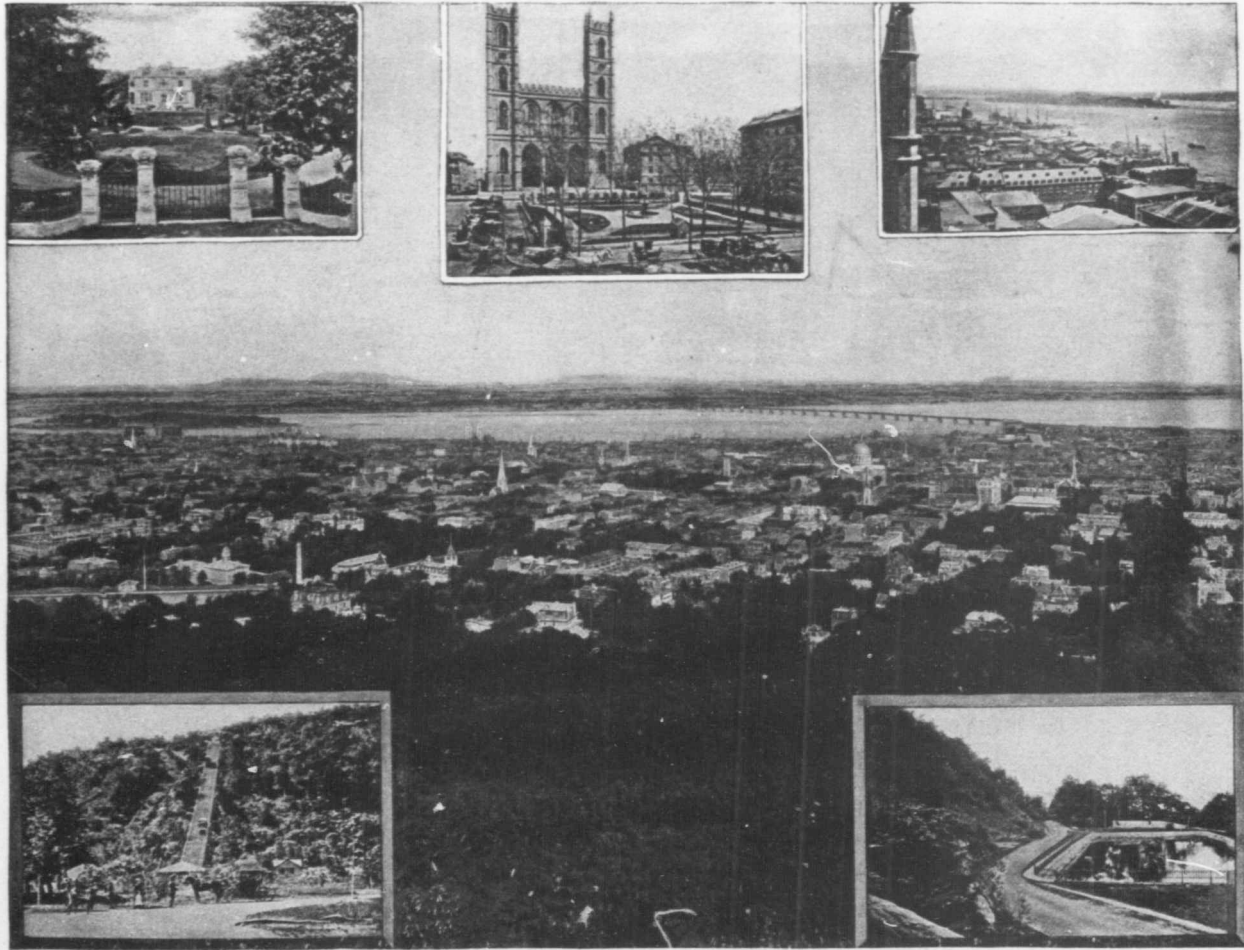
THE CITY OF QUEBEC, CANADA.

View from Lantz, Photographed by Wm. Norman & Son.



CHRIST AND THE ERRING WOMAN

A Study by Otto Wolf



THE CITY OF MONTREAL, FROM THE MOUNTAIN.



ROCKY MOUNTAINS, NEAR CANMORE.



BANFF SPRINGS HOTEL, CANADIAN NATIONAL PARK.

Stephen Skarridge's Christmas.

THE COTTAGE.

'Twas Christmas Eve. An adamantine sky hung dark and heavy over the white earth. The forests were enescent with frost, and the great trees bent as if they were not able to sustain the weight of snow and ice with which the young winter had loaded them.

In a by-path of the solemn woods there stood a cottage that would not, perhaps, have been noticed in the decreasing twilight had it not been for a little wisp of smoke that feebly curled from the chimney, apparently intending, every minute, to draw up its attenuated tail and disappear. Within, around the hearth whereon the dying embers sent up that feeble smoke, there gathered the family of Arthur Tyrrell—himself, his wife, a boy and a girl.

'Twas Christmas Eve. A damp air rushed from the recesses of the forest and came, an unbidden guest, into the cottage of the Tyrrells, and it sat on every chair and lay upon every bed, and held in its chilly embrace every member of the family. All sighed.

"Father," said the boy, "is there no more wood, that I may replenish the fire?"

"No, my son," bitterly replied the father, his face hidden in his hands; "I brought, at noon, the last stick from the wood-pile."

The mother, at these words, wiped a silent tear from her eyes, and drew her children yet nearer the smouldering coals. The father rose and moodily stood by the window, gazing out upon the night. A wind had now arisen, and the dead branches strewed the path that he soon must take to the neighboring town. But he cared not for the danger; his fate and heart were alike hard.

"Mother!" said the little girl, "shall I hang up my stockings to-night? 'Tis Christmas Eve."

A Damascus blade could not have cut the mother's heart more keenly than this question.

"No, dear," she faltered. "You must wear your stockings—there is no fire—and your feet, uncovered, will freeze."

The little girl sighed, and gazed sadly upon the blackening coals. But she raised her head again, and said,—

"But, mother, dear, if I should sleep with my legs outside the clothes, old Santa Claus might slip in some little things between the woolen and my skin; could he not, dear mother?"

"Mother is weeping, sister," said the boy, "press her no further."

The father now drew around him his threadbare coat, put upon his head his well-brushed straw hat, and approached the door.

"Where are you going, this bitter night, dear father?" cried his little son.

"He goes," then said the weeping mother, "to the town. Disturb him not, my son, for he will buy a mackerel for our Christmas dinner."

"A mackerel!" cried both the children, and their eyes sparkled with joy. The boy sprang to his feet.

"You must not go alone, dear father," he cried. "I will accompany you."

And together they left the cottage.

THE TOWN.

The streets were crowded with merry faces and well wrapped-up forms. Snow and ice, it is true, lay thick upon the pavements and roofs, but what of that? Bright lights glistened in every window, bright fires warmed and softened the air within the house, while bright hearts made rosy and happy the countenances of the merry crowd without. In some of the shops great turkeys hung in placid obesity from the bending beams, and enormous bowls of mince-meat sent up delightful fumes, which mingled harmoniously with the scents of the oranges, the apples, and the barrels of sugar and bags of spices. In others, the light from the chandeliers struck upon the polished surface of many a new wheelbarrow, sled, or hobby-horse, or lighted up the placid features of recumbent dolls and the demonical countenances of wildly jumping-jacks. The crop of marbles and tops was almost more than could be garnered; boxes and barrels of soldiers stood on every side; tin horns hung from every prominence, and boxes of wonders filled the counters; while all the floor was packed with joyous children carrying their little purses. Beyond, there stood the candy-stores—those earthly paradises of the young, where golden gum-drops, rare cream-chocolate, variegated mint-stick, and enrapturing mixtures spread their sweetened wealth over all available space.

To these and many other shops and stores and stalls and stands thronged the townspeople, rich and poor. Even the humblest had some money to spend upon this merry Christmas Eve. A damsel of the

lower orders might here be seen hurrying home with a cheap chicken; here another with a duck; and here the saving father of a family bent under the load of a turkey and a huge basket of auxiliary good things. Everywhere cheerful lights and warm hearthstones, bright and gay mansions, cosy and comfortable little tenements, happy hearts, rosy cheeks, and bright eyes. Nobody cared for the snow and ice, while they had so much that was warm and cheering. It was all the better for the holiday—what would Christmas be without snow?

AN INEVITABLE ENTRANCE.

Through these joyous crowds—down the hilarious streets, where the happy boys were shouting, and the merry girls were hurrying in and out of the shops—came a man who was neither joyous, hilarious, merry, nor happy. It was Stephen Skarridge, the landlord of so many houses in that town. He wore an overcoat, which, though old, was warm and comfortable, and he had fur around his wrists and neck. His hat was pushed down tight upon his little head, as though he would shut out all the sounds of merriment which filled the town. Wife and child he had none, and this season of joy to all the Christian world was an annoying and irritating season to his unsympathetic, selfish heart.

"Oh, ho!" he said to himself, as one after another of his tenants, loaded down with baskets and bundles, hurried by, each wishing him a merry Christmas; "oh, ho! there seems to be a great ease in the



THE CHRISTMAS MACKEREL SEIZED FOR RENT.

money market just now. Oh, ho, ho! They all seem as flush as millionaires. There's nothing like the influence of holiday times to make one open his pockets—ha, ha! It's not yet the first of the month, 'tis true; but it matters not. I'll go and collect my rents to-night, while all this money is afloat—oh, ho! ha, ha!"

And so old Skarridge went from house to house, and threatened with expulsion all who did not pay their rents that night. Some resisted bravely, for the settlement day had not yet arrived, and these were served with notices to leave at the earliest legal moment; while some, poor souls, had no money ready for this unforeseen demand, and Stephen Skarridge seized whatever he could find that would satisfy his claim. Thus many a poor weeping family saw the turkey or the fat goose which was to have graced the Christmas table carried away by the relentless landlord. The children shed tears to see their drums and toys depart, and many a little memento of affection, intended for a gift upon the morrow, became the property of the hard-hearted Stephen. 'Twas nearly nine o'clock when Skarridge finished his nefarious labor. He had converted his seizures into money, and was returning to his inhospitable home with more joyous light in his eye than had shone there for many a day, when he saw Arthur Tyrrell and his son enter the bright main street of the town.

"Oh, ho!" said Stephen; "has he, too, come to

spend his Christmas money? He, the poor, miserable, penniless one! I'll follow him."

So behind the unhappy father and his son went the skulking Skarridge. Past the grocery-store and the markets, with their rich treasures of eatables; past the toy-shops, where the boy's eyes sparkled with the delight which disappointment soon washed out with a tear; past the candy-shops, where the windows were so entrancing that the little fellow could scarcely look upon them—on, past all these, to a small shop at the bottom of the street, where a crowd of the very poorest people were making their little purchases, went the father and his son, followed by the evil-minded Skarridge. When the Tyrrells went into the shop, the old man concealed himself outside, behind a friendly pillar, lest any of these poor people should happen to be his tenants, and return him the damage he had just done to them. But he very plainly saw Arthur Tyrrell go up to the counter and ask for a mackerel. When one was brought, costing ten cents, he declined it, but eventually purchased a smaller one, the price of which was eight cents. The two cents which he received as change were expended for a modicum of lard, and father and son then left the store, mending their way homeward. The way was long, but the knowledge that they brought that which would make the next day something more like Christmas than an ordinary day, made their steps lighter and the path less wearisome.

They reached the cottage and opened the door. There, by a rushlight on a table, sat the mother and the little girl, arranging greens wherewith to decorate their humble home. To the mute interrogation of the mother's eyes the father said, with something of the old fervor in his voice:—

"Yes, my dear, I have got it," and he laid the mackerel on the table. The little girl sprang up to look at it, and the boy stepped back to shut the door; but before he could do so, it was pushed wide open, and Skarridge, who had followed them all the way, entered the cottage. The inmates gazed at him with astonishment; but they did not long remain in ignorance of the meaning of this untimely visit.

"Mr. Tyrrell," said Skarridge, taking out of his pocket a huge memorandum-book, and turning over the pages with a swift and practised hand, "I believe you owe me two months' rent. Let me see—yes, here it is—eighty-seven and a half cents—two months, at forty-three and three-quarter cents per month. I should like to have it now, if you please," and he stood with his head on one side, his little eyes gleaming with a yellow maliciousness.

Arthur Tyrrell arose. His wife crept to his side, and the two children ran behind their parents.

"Sir," said Tyrrell, "I have no money—do your worst."

"No money!" cried the hard-hearted Stephen. "That story will not do for me. Everybody seems to have money to-night; and, if they have none, it is because they have wilfully spent it. But if you really have none"—and here a ray of hope shot through the hearts of the Tyrrell family—"you must have something that will bring money, and that I shall seize upon. Ah, ha! I will take this!"

And he picked up the Christmas mackerel from the table where Arthur had laid it.

"'Tis very little," said Skarridge, "but it will at least pay me my interest." Wrapping it in the brown paper which lay under it, he thrust it into his capacious pocket, and without another word went out into the night.

Arthur Tyrrell sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands. His children, dumb with horror and dismay, clung to the rounds of his chair, while his wife, ever faithful in the day of sorrow as in that of joy, put her arm around his neck and whispered in his ear, "Cheer up, dear Arthur, all may yet be well; have courage! He did not take the lard!"

WHAT ALWAYS HAPPENS.

Swiftly homeward, through the forest, walked the triumphant Skarridge, and he reached his home an hour before midnight. He lived alone, in a handsome house (which he had seized for a debt), an old woman coming every day to prepare his meals and do the little housework that he required. Opening his door with his latch-key, he hurried upstairs, lighted a candle, and seating himself at a large table in a spacious room in the front of the house, he counted over the money he had collected that evening, entered the amounts in one of the great folios which lay upon the table, and locked up the cash in a huge safe. Then he took from his



MAKING OUT THE SCHEDULE.

pocket the mackerel of the Tyrrell family. He opened it, laid it flat upon the table before him, and divided it by imaginary lines into six parts.

"Here," said he to himself, "are breakfasts for six days—I would it were a week. I like to have things square and even. Had that man bought the ten-cent fish that I saw offered him, there would have been seven portions. Well, perhaps I can make it do, even now—let me see! A little off here—and the same off this—so—"

At this moment something very strange occurred. The mackerel, which had been lying, split open, upon its back, now closed itself, gave two or three long-drawn gasps, and then heaving a sigh of relief, it flapped its tail, rolled its eyes a little, and deliberately wriggling itself over to a pile of ledgers, sat up on its tail, and looked at Skarridge. This astounded individual pushed back his chair and gazed with all his eyes at the strange fish. But he was more astounded yet, when the fish spoke to him. "Would you mind," said the mackerel, making a very wry face, "getting me a glass of water? I feel all of a parch inside."

Skarridge mumbled out some sort of an assent, and hurried to a table near by, where stood a pitcher and a glass, and filling the latter he brought it to the mackerel. "Will you hold it to my mouth?" said the fish. Stephen complying, the mackerel drank a good half of the water.

"There," it said, "that makes me feel better. I don't mind brine if I can take exercise. But to lie perfectly still in salt water makes one feel wretched. You don't know how hungry I am. Have you any worms convenient?"

"Worms!" cried Stephen, "why, what a question! No, I have no worms."

"Well," said the fish, somewhat petulantly, "you must have some sort of a yard or garden; go and dig me some."

"Dig them!" cried Stephen. "Do you know it's winter, and the ground's frozen—and the worms too, for that matter?"

"I don't care anything for all that," said the mackerel. "Go you and dig some up. Frozen or thawed, it is all one to me now; I could eat them any way."

The manner of the fish was so imperative that Stephen Skarridge did not think of disobeying, but taking a crowbar and a spade from a pile of agricultural implements that lay in one corner of the room (and which had at various times been seized for debts), he lighted a lantern and went down into the little back garden. There he shoveled away the snow, and when he reached the ground he was obliged to use the crowbar vigorously before he could make any impression on the frozen earth. After a half-hour's hard labor, he managed, by most carefully searching through the earth thrown out of the hole he had made, to find five frozen worms. These he considered a sufficient meal for himself, and so he threw down his implements and went into the house, with his lantern, his five frozen worms, and twice as many frozen fingers. When he reached the bottom of the stairs he was certain that he heard the murmur of voices from above. He was terrified. The voices came from the room where all his treasures lay! Could it be thieves?

Extinguishing his lantern and taking off his shoes, he softly crept up the stairs. He had not quite closed the door of the room when he left it, and he could now look through an opening which commanded a view of the whole apartment. And such a sight now met his wide-stretched eyes!

In his chair—his own arm-chair—by the table, there sat a dwarf, whose head, as large as a prize cabbage, was placed upon a body so small as not to be noticeable, and from which depended a pair of little legs appearing like the roots of the before-mentioned vegetable. On the table, busily engaged in dusting a day-book with a pen-wiper, was a fairy, no more than a foot high, and as pretty and graceful as a queen of the ballet viewed from the dress circle. The mackerel still leaned against the pile of ledgers; and—oh horror!—upon a great iron box, in one corner, there sat a giant, whose head, had he stood up, would have reached the lofty ceiling!

A chill, colder than the frosty earth and air outside could cause, ran through the frame of Stephen Skarridge, as he crouched by the crack of the door and looked upon these dreadful visitors. And their conversation, of which he could hear distinctly every word, caused the freezing perspiration to trickle in icy globules down his back.

"He's gone to get me some worms," said the mackerel, "and we mig' as well settle it all before he comes back. For my part I'm very sure of what I have been saying."

"Oh, yes," said the dwarf; "there can be no doubt about it at all. I believe it, every word."

"Of course it is so," said the fairy, standing upon the day-book, which was now well dusted; "everybody knows it is."

"It couldn't be otherwise," said the giant, in a voice like thunder among the pines; "we're all agreed upon that."

"They're mighty positive about it, whatever it is," thought the trembling Stephen, who continued to look with all his eyes and to listen with all his ears.

"Well," said the dwarf, leaning back in the chair and twisting his little legs around each other until they looked like a rope's end. "Let us arrange matters. For my part, I would like to see all crooked things made straight, just as quickly as possible."

"So would I," said the fairy, sitting down on the day-book, and crossing her dainty satin-covered ankles, from which she stooped to brush a trifle of dust; "I want to see everything nice, and pretty, and just right."

"As for me," said the mackerel, "I'm somewhat divided—in my opinion, I mean—but whatever you all agree upon will suit me, I'm sure."

"Then," said the giant, rising to his feet, and just escaping a violent contact of his head with the ceiling, "let us get to work, and while we are about it we'll make a clean sweep of it."

To this the others all gave assent, and the giant, after moving the mackerel to one corner of the table, and requesting the fairy to stand beside the fish, spread all the ledgers and day-books, and cash, and bill, and memorandum books upon the table, and opened them all at the first page.

Then the dwarf climbed up on the table and took a pen, and the fairy did the same, and they both set to work as hard as they could, to take an account of Stephen Skarridge's possessions. As soon as either of them had added up two pages the giant turned over the leaves, and he had to be very busy about it, so active was the dwarf, who had a splendid head for accounts, and who had balanced the same head so long upon his little legs that he had no manner of difficulty in balancing a few ledgers. The fairy, too, ran up and down the columns as if she were dancing a measure in which the only movements were "Forward one!" and "Backward one!" and she got over her business nearly as fast as the dwarf. As for the mackerel, he could not add up, but the fairy told him what figures she had to carry to the next column, and he remembered them for her, and thus helped her a great deal. In less than half an hour the giant turned over the last page of the last book, and the dwarf put down on a large sheet of foolscap the sum-total of Stephen Skarridge's wealth.

The fairy read out the sum, and the woe-ful listener at the door was forced to admit to himself that they had got it exactly right.

"Now, then," said the giant, "here is the rent list. Let us make out the schedule." In twenty minutes the giant, the dwarf and the fairy—the last reading out the names

of Stephen's various tenants, the giant stating what amounts he deemed the due of each one, and the dwarf putting down the sums of posite their names, had made out the schedule, and the giant read it over in a voice that admitted of no inattention.

"Hurrah!" said the dwarf. "That's done, and I'm glad," and he stepped lightly from the table to the arm of the chair, and then down to the seat, and jumped to the floor, balancing his head in the most wonderful way, as he performed these agile feats.

"Yes," said the mackerel, "it's all right, though to be sure I'm somewhat divided."

"Oh! we won't refer to that now," said the giant; "let bygones be bygones."

As for the fairy, she didn't say a word, but she just bounced on the top of the day-book that she had dusted, and which now lay closed near the edge of the table, and she danced such a charming little *fandouille* that everybody gazed at her with delight. The giant stooped and opened his mouth as if he expected her to whirl herself into it when she was done; and the mackerel was actually moved to tears, and tried to wipe his eyes with his fin, but it was not long enough, and so the tears rolled down and hardened into a white crust on the green baize which covered the table. The dwarf was on the floor, and he just stood still on his little toes, as if he had been a great top dead asleep. Even Stephen, though he was terribly agitated, thought the dance was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. At length, with a whirl which made her look like a snow-ball on a pivot, she stopped stock-still, standing on one toe, as if she had fallen from the sky and had struck upright on the day-book.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried the dwarf, and you could hear his little hands clapping beneath his head.

"Hurrah!" cried the giant, and he brought his great palms together with a clap that rattled the window-panes like the report of a cannon.

"Very nice! very nice, indeed!" said the mackerel. "Though I'm rather di—"

"Oh, no, you're not!" cried the fairy, making a sudden joyful jump at him, and putting her little hand on his somewhat distorted and certainly very ugly mouth. "You're nothing of the kind, and now let's have him in here and make him sign. Do you think he will do it?" said she, turning to the giant. That mighty individual doubled up his great right fist like a trip-hammer, and he opened his great left hand, as hard and solid as an anvil, and he brought the two together with a sounding whang!

"Yes," said he, "I think he will."

"In that case," said the dwarf, "we might as well call him."

"I sent him after some worms," said the mackerel, "but he has not been all this time getting them. I should not wonder at all if he had been listening at the door all the while."

"We'll soon settle that," said the dwarf, walking rapidly across the room, his head rolling from side to side, but still preserving that admirable balance for which it was so justly noted. When he reached the door he pulled it wide open, and there stood poor Stephen Skarridge, trembling from head to foot, with the five frozen worms firmly grasped in his hands.



MR. SKARRIDGE WALKS IN.



ROSEDALE BRIDGE, TORONTO.

A School Meeting on Christmas Eve.

JAMES L. HUGHES.

Riding with a friend of my boyhood recently in my native County of Durham, we came, towards evening, to a hill-top from which we had a magnificent view. Sloping gradually southward to Lake Ontario, a dozen miles away, lay the fertile Township of Darlington, a panorama of beauty dotted with hundreds of fine farm homes; with many substantial churches and school-houses, sometimes standing alone, sometimes in pairs, symbolizing the harmony that should exist between religion and education; and with numerous villages crowning the hills or brightening the valleys, the whole coming to a focus in the busy town of Bowmanville away by the lake side.

"What a change in thirty years, Andrew," said I.

"Yes," he replied, "but the changes yonder have not been so great as right around us here."

"Quite true," said I. "Thirty years ago this district around us, and for miles northward, was the great Pine Ridge, a wilderness with only a few scattered log houses and shanties on its outskirts. Now most of it is cleared and settled. I remember well the time a little log school-house was built, where that neat brick building now stands. The people had to make great sacrifices in those days to get even the log building, but they determined to get an education for their children, so they formed a union section extending for several miles and including parts of three townships—Darlington, Clarke and Manvers—and erected their log school-house. I was present at the meeting called to choose the first teacher, and it was one of the most exciting and amusing nights of my life."

"I would like an account of it," said my friend.

"Very well," said I, and as we rode along in the pleasant evening I recalled and described my first visit to the neighborhood through which we were passing.

Twenty-eight years ago last Christmas Eve I was doing up my "chores," before supper, when a neighbor of ours, Frank Stinson, who had been elected chairman of the School Board in the new section, came over to ask me to go with him that evening to take the minutes of the "School meetin'" for him. I agreed to go, and about seven o'clock we started. We took a foot-path through the wild pine woods and had a charming walk. I can hear now the weird music of the wind among the pine tops and see the wondrous shadows in the bright moonlight on the soft snow, and the sparkling of the large unmelted snow crystals that glittered on the boughs of the young hemlocks.

The meeting was held in Davy Sinclair's house. It was a large log house. When we arrived we found the big room of the house well filled with "bush-men" and farmers eagerly discussing the momentous business of the hour. The appointment of the first teacher in a new district is no slight matter. This meeting was the culmination of the efforts of the whole district for months—since they began to build their school-house. There were two candidates in the field, Sarah Crandall and Peter McIntosh. Miss Crandall belonged to the district. She had a very limited education. She had no certificate to teach, but she had gone to the High School in Bowmanville for a few weeks and was therefore recommended for her "larkin'" in the neighborhood. Mr. McIntosh was a foppish young exquisite who had been to the Normal School in Toronto, but who looked as if the Normal School had not developed him so much as those other departments of culture, the jewelry store, the tailor's shop, and the barber's shop.

Each candidate had friends. The feeling ran higher because there were only two candidates, and when we entered their merits and demerits were being discussed in a most animated way by several distinct groups, some standing in front of the wide open fire and others seated around the room.

"Yer late," said Davy Sinclair, in a good-natured way, as we entered the room.

"A little," replied Mr. Stinson, "but you seem to hev wasted no time."

"No; we hev been thinkin' 'bout the bizness of the meetin'."

"Purty loud thinkin', I guess," said Mr. Stinson; "we heard you thinkin' way down in the woods."

"We wuz jist gittin' steam up," said Jim McCafferty, a bustling Irishman, the leader of the Crandall party, "and I move that Frank takes the chair, so't we kin git till bizness or some bilers will

once and had been to the Normal School and had high recommendats."

"He's Scotch, I understand, Mr. Sinclair," said Jim McCafferty.

"I believe his father was," replied Davy.

"Ye see how clannish thim Scotch always is," said Jim hoping to arouse the prejudices of the Irish voters in favor of Miss Crandall, apparently oblivious to the fact that he was appealing to clannishness in Irishmen, while condemning it in Scotchmen.

"Davy hev daughters," he continued, appealing



A FRENCH-CANADIAN VILLAGE.

lust." The motion was seconded and duly carried. I was appointed secretary on the nomination of the chairman, who recommended me as "well schooled." The chairman explained the business of the meeting in a long, dry, tedious speech, although everyone present knew the business perfectly, and had in reality decided how to vote. However, everybody listened attentively, as if the chairman's "openin' remarks" were a most important part of the proceedings. When he finished he said, "The meetin' is now open for nominations."

Jim McCafferty was on his feet in an instant. "I nominate Sarah Crandall," said he, excitedly. "She's a girl in the naberrud; she's one av ourselves like; she'll be taichin' no newfangled airs or nonsense till our childher, and she'll taich fur little wages, and to my thinkin' that same is no small matter." He made his brief speech forcibly, emphasizing it with vigorous gestures and he was rewarded by enthusiastic applause from the most demonstrative part of the audience.

Davy Sinclair, in a more deliberate way, proposed Mr. McIntosh as "a young man who had experi-

to another prejudice, "that thinks themselves too good for the young men of the naberrud, and they would hould their heads up very high if they could get a city fellow into the family."

"Let my daughters alone," said Davy, warmly; "I'd be long sorry if they'd ever have such bad luck as to have anything to do with you. You mind Miss Crandall. Her sister has been a long time on the shelf, and maybe she might take you; no one else would, I'm thinking."

This was a straight hit. Jim was a widower and had been visiting Miss Crandall's maiden sister for some time. Everybody laughed heartily at Davy's home thrust, and Jim saw he had blundered badly in making any references to courtship, so he hastened to distract attention from himself by ridiculing Mr. McIntosh who was present at the meeting, and he joined in the laugh at Jim's expense.

"Luck at the young gentleman," said Jim with a malicious emphasis on "gentleman." "Luck at him will yiz? Do yiz see the illigant ring he bez on his finger? ay and his broad cloth shoot? Phew! smell the hair-oil on him! Ye'll have till work hard till keep up with yer perfume young man. Don't turn yer head too quick or yer high collar will cut off wan av yer ears and if ye lost yer ears yer own mother wouldn't know ye. Keep away from the light young man," said he waving his arm, "or the waggin of yer ears will put it out."

The chairman who dreaded Miss Crandall's appointment was shrewd enough to see that Jim's tactics were creating sympathy for Mr. McIntosh, so he let him proceed with his personal abuse. The audience soon tired of it, however, and Jim's voice was drowned with loud cries of "Order, Order, Order Mr. Chairman."

When at last order was secured, the chairman asked that an application be handed in from each candidate in writing. This proposition was made with a view of placing Miss Crandall at a disadvantage. He knew she was not a good writer and he knew also that good penmanship is to the uneducated a certain evidence of great culture. He was not the only one acquainted with these facts, however. Sarah Crandall's father well knew them too, and was prepared for the emergency. He had learned "writin' and cipherin'" in the north of Ireland, and though he had lost nearly every eternal trace of his early culture, he had not lost the art of penmanship. As soon as written applications were called for, Tom Crandall's giant form arose from the corner in which he had sat over with an air of stately superiority, he laid a sheet of soiled foolscap on the chairman's table, saying with solemn deliberation, "My daughter's epistle lies before you, sir." Mr. McIntosh had no written application, so he was asked to write one on a leaf torn from the old copy book in which I was writing the minutes.

While he was writing, the chairman opened Miss Crandall's application and handed it to me, asking me quietly to point out any faults I could find in it. It was a most extraordinary "epistle" consisting merely of the words:

"Sarah Crawford, Cartwright, Cannada, America." These words were written five times in as many varieties of penmanship; the difference between the lines being chiefly in the size of the writing, and the roundness or angularity of the letters. It was clear to me that the writing had been done by a man. I called the chairman's attention to this fact, and he said:

"Some of this does not look like a girl's writin', Mr. Crandall."

"Mebby not to your eyes, Mr. Stinson; and I suppose you are not to blame for your ignorance. Some people can only write one kind of handwritin', but you must understand that my daughter can write a variety of text hands, Mr. Stinson."

This brought a wild cheer from Miss Crandall's friends led on by Jim McCafferty.

While they were cheering I told the chairman she had two "n's" instead of one, in the word "Canada."

"I notice that your daughter's spellin' is not good," said Mr. Stinson more than ever anxious to establish his own reputation for scholarship and to overthrow Miss Crandall's.

"What do you think is the matter with the spellin', Mr. Stinson?" demanded Jim McCafferty.

"She has two 'n's' in Canada and there should be only one," said the chairman.

For an instant there was a look of anxiety on the faces of the Crandall party, as they looked, first at their leaders, and then at each other. Anxiety was just deepening into gloom when the awful stillness was broken by one of the more independent of the McIntosh party who said:

"I think you are wrong Mr. Chairman, there are two 'n's' in Canada."

Instantly the dark faces shone again, bright with confidence and hope. "Of course there are two;" "Certainly;" "Everybody knows that;" and similar assertions were now shouted from every corner of the room. The Crandall party was unanimously in favor of two "n's," and their opponents were about equally divided. The appointment of a teacher was forgotten. The spelling of "Canada" aroused the intense interest of every man in the room. Interest led to action. Men sprang from their seats and rushed across the room to abuse their neighbors for daring to leave Canada with only one "n" in it. The chairman lost control of the meeting and it became a scene of wild confusion.

Seeing two-thirds of the meeting against him, the chairman became anxious. He turned despairingly to me, and whispered doubtfully, "Are you sure?" "Are you sure?"



ROSS PEAK GLACIER.

"Certainly," I said.

Thus assured, he shouted "Order," until he secured partial attention, and appealed to me publicly for my opinion. I gave it with full confidence, and the chairman and one-third of the meeting cheered. From the other two-thirds I heard in two minutes more uncomplimentary personal observations than I ever heard in the same time on any other occasion even in a political meeting.

Mr. McIntosh was appealed to by the "two-n" party, and my amazement was complete when he turned toward me with a look of pity combined with amusement, and said:

"Well, there were two 'n's' in Canada when I went to school."

This reply unlocked the fountains of joy in the hearts of the majority, and they cheered wildly for

some minutes. Then Jim McCafferty, emboldened by the teacher's opinion and the enthusiasm of numbers, came forward, and striking the table in front of the chairman, said:

"I'll bet my yoke of steers, agin a rooster, that you're wrong, Mr. Chairman."

No one dared to take the bet, and Tom Crandall, thinking the time for action had arrived, arose, and stretching his arm towards the chairman in a tragic manner, said with a look and tone of triumph and defiance:

"Ye'll find the punctuation of my daughter's epistle correct, Mr. Stinson. I wonder at an ignorant ould clodhopper darin' to preshoom to prevaricate with my daughter, a girl of rale larnin'."

This, too, was greeted with applause, and for a moment it seemed as if the meeting would resent the insult to Miss Crandall and to "Canada," by making a personal attack on the chairman and myself. However, I made a diversion by asking Davy Sinclair if "he had any book in which the word 'Canada' occurred?" This seemed to meet with general approval, but Davy could find no book in the house except the Bible and Ayer's Almanac. There was no hope of finding it in the Bible, so Mr. McIntosh and I took the almanac and scanned it page by page, while the meeting held its breath. At last I found a statement of a remarkable cure effected through the use of "Ayer's Sarsaparilla," and signed "James E. Coerts, Thorold, Canada."

Seizing the book, I rushed to Jim McCafferty and asked him "How many 'n's' he could find in Canada?"

For a moment he seemed grateful for the safety of his steers; but he was not ready to acknowledge defeat yet.

"Where's this almanac printed?" said he; "in Canada or the States?"

I acknowledged that it was in the States.

"Well, I'll take no Yankee spellin'," said he; "they're awful ignorant craytures over there. No loyal man would stand by Yankee spellin'."

This sentiment met with general approval, and seemed to strengthen the opinion in favor of two "n's."

"I am sure I saw it with only one 'n' in the *Globe* to-day," said an old gentleman.

"An' who'd take a rebel rag like that fur authority?" contemptuously enquired Tom Crandall; "not me, anyway."

The majority fully agreed with him that the *Globe* could not be an acceptable authority. Mr. McIntosh said, however, that he was wrong, and fearing new revelations spoke vaguely of "typographical errors."

I knew that Davy Sinclair took the *Leader*, the popular Conservative paper of the time, and I asked him for a copy. No copy could be found, however, and Davy explained apologetically that "after Sunday his wife commonly used the paper to light the fire."

Just at that moment I noticed that Mrs. Sinclair had not burned all her *Leaders*, for her entire best room was papered with them. I called the attention of the meeting to the fact, and in an instant forty earnest students were engaged in studying the walls of Davy's room. After a long search "Canada" was found, spelled with one "n." There was no appealing against the *Leader*.

The Supreme Court had decided in my favor. I had narrowly escaped the imputation of being a "Yankee," and a "rebel," and had become the hero of the hour.

Jim McCafferty covered his defeat and restored good humor by saying, "I'm surprised to find the *Globe* and *Leader* agres'in' in anything."

Miss Crandall's appointment was now out of the question. Her blame had brought her friends into disgrace and she could not be forgiven. Mr. McIntosh was a fellow-sufferer with the majority, and having been on the same side in the spelling question their sympathies were drawn out towards him. Jim McCafferty generously proposed that I should be the teacher, and my recent exhibition of "extraordinary larnin'" led the meeting to join

with him almost unanimously. I declined the honor, however, and Mr. McIntosh was appointed.

He did not marry one of "Davy's daughters," and therefore the social balance of the district was not disturbed.

Jim McCafferty soon ceased to visit Miss Crandall the elder. I jokingly enquired the cause of his unfaithfulness some time afterwards, when he very confidentially informed me "that he had raly gone to see her at first supposin' the family to be well larned, but findin' at the school meetin' that her sister couldn't spell, he had tested his lady love in 'rithmetic and had found her terribly ignorant. Man dear," said he, "I asked her 'if a herrin' and a half cost three-half-pence, how many could I get for seven-pence?' and she couldn't answer me. I couldn't demean the McCafferty's by marryin' a woman like that."

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THE growing demand from all quarters for the discussion and, as far as possible, settlement of important and vital questions of social, moral, religious, and political interest has made it imperative that some paper of wide circulation open its columns for ex-

pressions of opinion from men and women of experience and judgment to the end that the masses of our population may be better able to come to correct conclusions regarding them.

To meet this demand THE SATURDAY LEDGER has started the ball rolling by submitting as the first of a quite lengthy series of subjects for discussion the question, "Can a Man be a Successful Politician and a Sincere Christian?" This controversy has been opened up by interviews by a LEDGER representative with a number of prominent citizens, as well as by letters received from well-known men in different walks of life. Hon. Oliver Mowat, Rev. G. M. Milligan, Mr. Robert McLean, Dr. Alexander Sutherland, Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, Ex-Mayor Howland, Archbishop Walsh, Mr. Henry O'Brien, Stapleton Caldecott, Rev. Principal Grant, of Queen's University, Kingston, Rev. Dr. Briggs, Methodist Book Steward, Rev. T. W. Jeffery, and Rev. Hugh Johnston have all contributed in some form to the discussion, anyone of whose opinions is well worth the price of a year's subscription. It may be fairly claimed, we think, that, considering the fact that only three issues of the LEDGER have contained any reference to this important topic, great interest has thus far been developed, and arguing from this fact there is no doubt whatever that before the lapse of many weeks there will be very wide-spread interest if, indeed, not great excitement aroused. A few sentences taken from some of the letters will show the scope and character of the discussion.

One says: "A man who takes no interest in politics—renders no service to his country—is a social nobody and deserves not the name of Christian."

Another writes as follows: "The question for a sincere Christian to settle with himself, if he thinks that he is called to go into politics, is this: Do I believe that the majority of my countrymen will approve of a righteous course in their representative? If he answers that in the affirmative, his course is clear; if he answers it in the negative, he had better stay outside and do his best to improve his countrymen in his private capacity."

The views of another are thus forcibly put: "No government will ever be placed on a secure basis until politicians are converted into Christians. Christianity is sound. Politics is rotten to the core. God is the Father of one; the devil of the other. They are diametrically opposed. Christianity is embodied self-negation. Politics is embodied selfishness. 'No man can serve two masters.'"

Yet another opinion: "It is increasingly seen that every problem that faces humanity must be faced at the polls; that every subject that touches the general welfare must be grappled with in the legislature; that there is no more stupendous folly on earth nowadays than to suppose that politics can give any moral question the slip."

And still another: "It is difficult to be a good Christian in any calling. A man can be a Christian and be anything not inherently evil, such as stealing and falsehood. It is harder to be a Republican in the United States now than thirty years ago, and be at the same time a Christian; such is the policy of greed, of pelf, and power."

The last our space will permit: "Whether successful or not in the ordinary sense of that word, a man may well serve his country in political life and be a thorough Christian. Every citizen who is a Christian should take an interest in politics, that is, in the government of the country, and no Christian man should have any doubt as to whether he should bring his Christianity to bear upon political duty as well as on social and business relations."

For the interviews and letters in full send for back and future numbers of THE SATURDAY LEDGER, which may be had at the publication office, number 10 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.

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